

IOWA COLLEGE STUDENT AID COMMISSION

Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing and Health Sciences Application for Postsecondary Registration in Iowa October 13, 2016

STAFF ACTION: Approve Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing and Health Sciences for a two-year registration term that begins on October 13, 2016 through October 13, 2018.

Registration Purpose

Revised Iowa Code Sections 261B.2 (definitions) and 261B.3 (effective July 1, 2012) require a school to register with the Commission if a person compensated by the school conducts any portion of a course of instruction, including by in-person, distance education, or correspondence method in this state or if the school otherwise has a presence in this state. Presence means a location in Iowa at which a student participates in any structured activity related to a school's distance education course of instruction. Presence also means an address, location, telephone number, or internet protocol address in Iowa from which a school conducts any aspect of its operations. Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing and Health Sciences (the College) applied for registration to offer distance education programs. Staff required the College to register because the offers distance education programs which contain structured field experiences that an Iowa resident may participate in at an Iowa location.

It should be noted that while some of these programs include courses that the College encourages students to attend at the school's campus in Illinois, the College states that on-campus attendance is optional, not mandatory. All of the Colleges' distance education programs can be completed without out-of-state, on-campus attendance.

Institutional Information

Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing and Health Sciences is a private non-profit institution that is a subsidiary of Blessing Hospital. The College's main campus is located at PO Box 7005; N 11th St, Quincy, IL 62305. The school's chief executive officer is Brenda Breshears, Ph.D., RN. Since the College is applying for registration to offer wholly online programs, it has no Iowa contact person. The College is not registered with the Iowa Secretary of State as a corporation conducting business in Iowa, and the Commission cannot require that it do so.

Physical Facilities: Not applicable for a distance education program provider.

Accreditation: The College is institutionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, a regional accrediting agency recognized by the federal Department of Education. The College is also accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, which is a programmatic accrediting agency that is also recognized by the federal Department of Education.

Federal Stafford Loan Cohort Default Rate (FFY 2013, under the institution name Blessing Hospital): 0%. For comparison purposes, the FFY 2013 national average cohort default rate is 11.3%.

Graduation Rate: This is the percentage of first-time, full-time undergraduate students who graduated within 150% of the normal time for program completion, as reported to the federal Department of Education. The College did not admit full-time, first-time undergraduate level students in the cohort year, therefore the graduation rate information was not reported.

Average Loan Debt upon Graduation: \$32,106.

Record Preservation: The College maintains hard copies of records in locked, fireproof, and heat-resistant cabinets in the Registrar's office. The electronic student database (CAMS) is stored on the College's network and backed up nightly using two off site network-attached (NAS) servers, creating a redundant back-up system. Documents and grade books on Blackboard are backed up by Blackboard as part of its hosting services. Student records are purged after seven years but transcripts are maintained indefinitely

Transcript Requests: The College requires that current and former students fill out a transcript request form in order to obtain copies of their transcripts; there is a \$5.00 charge for each transcript. Students must mail the form and fee to the Registrar in the following manner:

Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing
Attention: Registrar
P.O. Box 7005
Quincy, IL 62305-7005

Students may access a transcript request form at <http://www.brcn.edu/?id=1619&sid=7>.

Instructional Methodology: The College uses Blackboard as the central platform for online course delivery. Both, synchronous and asynchronous, courses are available to students. Regardless what format the course is, students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and/ or meet deadlines for online discussion. The College's system is not made compatible with Macintosh computers. In addition to the Blackboard portal, students do also have access to a Webmail portal for email. At <http://www.brcn.edu/distanceeducation>, the College provides online students with the following resources:

Tutorial videos on topics such as computer basics, internet basics, and Microsoft office. Resource links to the Learning Resource Center or online students on its website at <http://www.brcn.edu/distanceeducation>.

Student Learning Resources: Online students have access to the Blessing Health Professions Library <http://library.brcn.edu/>. The Library is equipped with a number of databases, journals, books, e-books, and videos that are accessible to remote students. Tutorials that help students become familiar with Library resources and search techniques are available online at <http://library.brcn.edu/tutorials>. Online research resources are available at <http://library.brcn.edu/research>. Students may order printed work through RSACat; instructions for making such a request can be found at https://alsi.sdp.sirsi.net/client/en_US/BlessingHealth/. Interlibrary Loan <http://library.brcn.edu/ill> is also available for students who wish to request a book or photocopy of a journal that is not held in the Blessing Health Professions Library. Dedicated Library staff <http://library.brcn.edu/?id=1070&sid=13> may be contacted by phone (not toll-free), fax, email or

Skype. Students may choose to take advantage of the Ask a Librarian service offered by the College. The student must fill out a form, <http://library.brcn.edu/formbuilder/forms.aspx?formid=95839&sid=13>, and a librarian will then contact them. Library hours are Monday – Thursday 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sunday 12 noon to 8 p.m.

The College offers an online Learning Resource Center (LRC) <http://www.brcn.edu/?id=1230&sid=7>, which can help students learn how to effectively apply skills and learning strategies to become successful independent and active learners. Specifically, the LRC offers assistance in formatting papers, study sessions, test-taking strategies, and help with medical mathematics. These services are available to online students using Skype, phone, email, and web conferencing.

Students may contact the Information Technology (IT) department with any technical questions or concerns. The contact information can be located at, <http://www.brcn.edu/ithelpdesk>.

Curriculum Evaluation and Development: The College ensures that all nursing faculty are members of the Curriculum Committee and that all faculty members teaching in the graduate program are members of the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Program Committee. The Curriculum Committee oversees developing, evaluating, and revising undergraduate nursing curricula. The MSN Program Committee oversees developing, evaluating, and revising of the graduate nursing curricula. Both of these committees report to the Faculty Senate.

Student Complaints Process: The College maintains a formal procedure that allows students to address non-academic grievances or complaints, as follows:

- When the student believes he/she has been treated unfairly, he/she is to do the following within two weeks of the incident:
 - ✓ Meet with the other party to clarify the problem, and reach a resolution.
 - ✓ If unsuccessful, contact the Chair of the Student Development Committee within one week of the meeting with the other party.
- The Chair of the Student Development Committee will schedule a meeting within two weeks to mediate a resolution between the student and the other party.
- The student may request a hearing when mediation does not lead to resolution. This request for a hearing is a written statement submitted to the Chair of the Student Development Committee within two weeks of mediation, and describes:
 - ✓ The pertinent facts of the condition giving rise to the grievance.
 - ✓ The name of the other party, and the action requested to resolve the situation.
 - ✓ This written request must be received by the Chair of the Student Development Committee within two weeks of the meeting to mediate.
- If the student is still not satisfied, he/she may (within 10 working days of receipt of report) request a hearing as outlined under “Hearing Procedures” in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Hearing requests must be in writing, and provide pertinent facts and names of individuals leading to the request.

Students may access the non-academic grievance and hearing procedures in the College’s Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs, at:

- <http://www.brcn.edu/upload/docs/BRCN/2016-2017%20BRCN%20Undergraduate%20Program%20Catalog%20and%20Student%20Handbook.pdf>
- <http://www.brcn.edu/upload/docs/BRCN/StudentServices/Program%20Catalog/2017-2018%20BRCN%20Graduate%20Catalog%20Handbook.pdf>

Students may also report incidents to the President, Assistant Dean of Student Services, Academic Dean and Student Services Officer.

Distance Education Programs Offered In Iowa

The following list of programs offered by the College includes the total, estimated cost of tuition, fees, books and supplies for each program.

Undergraduate Programs:

- Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN to BSN): \$17,575

Graduate Programs:

- Registered Nurse (RN) to Master of Science in Nursing (MSN): \$33,075
- Master of Science in Nursing: \$24,075

Students enrolled in either of these graduate programs may choose one of the following concentrations: Administration, Education, or Advanced Generalist:

Field Experience: The College maintains distance education programs that require the student to complete field work in a clinical setting at a health care facility that may be in the student's local area. Clinical practicum proposals are approved by faculty. Students may choose a preceptor, i.e., a clinical site supervisor, but that preceptor must meet certain minimum standards. In the RN to BSN program, the preceptor must be a registered nurse with a minimum of a baccalaureate degree in nursing. In the MSN program, the preceptor must have a minimum of a master's degree in nursing. Preceptors share responsibility with College faculty for evaluating a student's progress toward accomplishing objectives. The instructor and student will conference twice during the term to discuss the student's progress. All students must keep a Clinical Journal that is submitted to the College at the end of the term and that becomes part of the student's evaluation.

The following is a list of programs which contain field experiences and a description of the field experience required in each program:

- RN to BSN: The field experience in this program is a Capstone course in which students will participate in a professional mentorship with a preceptor. This practicum focuses on the application of management and community health concepts, theories, and principles in nursing practice in diverse settings.
- MSN and RN to MSN: Both of these programs contain field experience courses that vary, depending on the concentration the student has chosen – Administration, Education, or Advanced Generalist:
 - ✓ Advanced Whole Person Nursing Practicum: Emphasis is placed on advanced assessment and clinical decision making with the management of a selected population.

The end result is the implementation of a health promotion project/program for the selected population.

- ✓ Administration Practicum I: This practicum focuses on the nursing administrator's role in providing quality nursing care in an environment of reduced resources. Each student, in collaboration with faculty, will develop an individual plan to increase knowledge and skills through a variety of experiences focusing on: critically reading and analyzing financial reports; investigating cost behavior; profit analysis; cost allocation; pricing and servicing decisions; managerial accounting; planning and budgeting; time value analysis; financial risk; effect of health policy on healthcare finances; project management; lean methodologies; and strategic planning and resource allocation.
- ✓ Administration Practicum II: This practicum focuses on the nursing administrator's role in assessing and leading cultural change within a health care organization. Practicum faculty and students will develop individual plans to increase knowledge and skills through a variety of experiences focusing on: healthy culture, assessment of culture, managing people in an evolving organization, managing social and organizational processes, and ethical decision making.
- ✓ Teaching Practicum: This practicum gives students the opportunity to integrate clinical knowledge with the role, responsibilities, and activities of the nurse educator. Learning experiences include interactions with experienced nurse educators and students, participation in simulations of nurse educator situations, and reflections based on self-critiques as a nurse educator. Students are expected to design and then implement a practicum plan that is approved by the course instructor. Students are also expected to take on responsibilities and activities that will promote competency with the nurse educator role.

Registration Compliance

As required by Iowa Code Section 261B.4, the College disclosed its institutional policy for refunding tuition charges to students who withdraw from its programs. The College discloses the policy to students in its Catalog at

<http://www.brcn.edu/upload/docs/BRCN/StudentServices/Program%20Catalog/2015-2016%20Ac%20FA%20St%20Handbook.pdf>. The policy itself is not a registration criterion since the College is not a for-profit institution.

Administrative rules specifically require the school to comply with the requirements of Chapter 261.9(1) "e" through "h".

- Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(e) requires a school to maintain and disseminate a drug and alcohol abuse policy that includes sanctions for violation of the school's policy and information about the availability of drug or alcohol counseling or rehabilitation. Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(f) requires a school to maintain and disseminate a sexual abuse policy that includes information about counseling opportunities and reporting instances of sexual abuse to school officials and law enforcement. These requirements duplicate policies and disclosures required by the federal Department of Education for a school that participates in the federal student aid programs. The College complies with the requirements of Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(e) and (f), and discloses these policies to students in various locations and documents posted on its website, those locations are:
 - ✓ <http://www.brcn.edu/upload/docs/BRCN/StudentServices/2015%20AnnualSecurityReport%20revised%209.17.pdf>

- ✓ <http://www.brcn.edu/?id=1678&sid=7>
 - ✓ <http://www.brcn.edu/upload/docs/BRCN/StudentServices/Program%20Catalog/2015-2016%20Ac%20FA%20St%20Handbook.pdf>
 - ✓ <http://www.brcn.edu/?id=1666&sid=7>
 - ✓ <http://www.brcn.edu/upload/docs/BRCN/StudentServices/Campus%20Safety/KCP-4677086-v1-BRCN Sexual Misconduct Policy - working.pdf>
- Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(g) requires a school to maintain a special policy for refunding tuition and mandatory fees to members of the Iowa National Guard or reserve members of the U.S. Armed Forces, or the spouse of such a member if the member has a dependent child, when the service member or spouse must withdraw from the school because the service member has been called to active (Iowa) state or federal military duty or service. During the registration evaluation process, the College adopted this policy institution-wide. The College discloses the policy in admissions packets and on its website <http://www.brcn.edu/upload/docs/BRCN/FinancialAid/Military%20Deployment%20Tuition%20Fee%20Refund.pdf>.
 - Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(h) requires a school to develop and implement a policy requiring employees, who in the course of their employment, attend, examine, counsel, or treat a child to immediately report suspects incidents of child physical and sexual abuse to law enforcement and to the school. By cross-reference to existing administrative rules for registration [283-21.2(261B), subsection 7], this policy applies to schools that offer distance education programs and that have Iowa-resident employees or contractors (including online program faculty). The College does not employ Iowa staff or faculty. Therefore, the College is not required to adopt this policy.

Student Consumer Information: In its registration application, the College affirms its willingness to comply with the requirements of Iowa Code Chapter 261.9, as stipulated by Iowa Code Section 261B.4(8). Chapter 261.9 requires a school to disclose to students information about the school's programs, charges, tuition refund policies, whether a certificate or diploma awarded by the school is applicable toward a degree program the school offers, and the identity of the school's accrediting agency. These disclosures are duplicative of the federal Department of Education's student consumer information disclosure requirements for a school that participates in the federal student aid programs and is disclosed in the College Catalog at <http://www.brcn.edu/upload/docs/BRCN/StudentServices/Program%20Catalog/2015-2016%20Ac%20FA%20St%20Handbook.pdf>.

Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing and Health Sciences affirms on the application that it will comply with the provisions of Iowa Code Section 261B.7, which state that provided the school does not claim "approval" or "accreditation," the school must disclose to students that it is registered by the Commission and provide Commission contact information for students who have questions or complaints about the school. The College provides this disclosure on its website at <http://www.brcn.edu/?id=829&sid=7>.

Financial Responsibility: The College submitted an independent audit report dated January 14, 2016, for the institutional fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, conducted by KPMG LLP. The auditors stated their opinion that the schedule of revenues and expenses reviewed

presents fairly, in all material respects, the revenues and expenses of Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the U.S.

- A private non-profit institution that participates in the federal student aid programs must maintain a composite score, based on a three factor financial responsibility ratio, of at least 1.5 in order to be determined “financially responsible” without additional oversight. The most recent composite score for Blessing Rieman College of Nursing (a subsidiary of Blessing Hospital) verified by the federal Department of Education is 2.8 (out of a possible 3.0) for the institutional fiscal year ending September 30, 2014.
- The institution is not required to calculate the percentage of its revenue derived from federal student aid funds since it is not a for-profit institution.

Full-Time Iowa Resident Faculty Member or Program Coordinator: Iowa administrative rules do not require a school to employ a full-time, Iowa-based faculty member or program coordinator if the school applies for authorization to offer only distance education programs. The College has no Iowa-based faculty.

Instructional/Supervisory Staff Qualifications: The College maintains credentials for 23 faculty members, for the BSN and MSN programs, on its website <http://www.brcn.edu/?id=998&sid=7>. Out of those 23 faculty members, 18 hold master level degrees in nursing. All 18 faculty members are also registered nurses. Five instructors hold doctoral level degrees.

These instructors specialize in the following: trauma nursing and leadership, psychiatric and mental health nursing, education and counseling psychology, maternal child health, diabetes care, nursing education, distance learning, medical and surgical nursing, and critical care nursing.

Three of the administrative staff members are also professors at College:

- The current President/CEO of the College holds a doctoral degree and specializes in medical and surgical nursing, education, faculty engagement in nursing practice simulation, and leadership development.
- The Administrative Coordinator for Assessment and Director of the Master’s Program holds a doctoral degree and specializes in instructional design and adult/family health.
- The Assistant Dean for Support Services holds a master’s degree in nursing, has additional professional certifications, is the author of several professional publications, and has participated in research projects. This instructor specializes in leadership and management.

Commitment to Iowa Students and Teach-Out: By executing an electronic signature on the registration application, former President/CEO, Pamela S. Brown, Ph.D. committed to the delivery of programs the College offers and agreed to provide alternatives for students to complete programs at the College or another school if the College closes a program, or if the College closes before students have completed their courses of study.

Student Complaints: None.

Compliance with Iowa Code Chapter 714

Section 714.18 – Evidence of Financial Responsibility

Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing is approved for the financial responsibility exemption listed under Iowa Code 714.19, subsection 2, as a school “. . .of nursing accredited by the board of nurse examiners or an equivalent public board of another state or foreign country.” Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing is approved by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, Division of Professional Regulation, and by the Missouri Board of Nursing to offer nursing education programs.

Section 714.23 – State Tuition Refund Policy

The Iowa tuition refund policy does not apply to Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing because it is not a for-profit institution.